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### **Kansas farmers encouraged to be proactive in wheat disease control**

Manhattan, Kansas – Kansas farmers are encouraged to be especially cognizant during wheat planting season to select wheat varieties with high resistance to fungal diseases as well as to apply fungicides to seed before drilling wheat this season. Wheat flag smut was detected in Kansas earlier this summer and with potential yield and trade implications from the fungus prevention in the upcoming crop will be important

“Research has shown that the use of certified seed combined with fungicide seed treatments, which are very economical, are highly effective in preventing the presence of flag smut and is an important tool in successful mitigation of the disease,” said Jeff Vogel, KDA’s Plant Protection and Weed Control program manager. He noted that producers and seedsmen should follow proper protocols to ensure that a thorough and even application of fungicide is made to the seed to ensure a high level of product efficacy.

A wheat industry working group was assembled this summer to determine best voluntary management practices and mitigation strategies to help ensure that the presence of the disease, which is considered a harmful organism by some international trading partners, does not spread or increase in 2016.

While the most effective way to break the disease cycle, which can lie dormant in the soil for as many as four or five years, is using fungicide treated seed, other recommended strategies include avoiding early planting conditions that place seed into warm moist soils, which are known to favor infection by the flag smut fungus and to consider crop rotation with non-host crops such as soybeans, sorghum and corn, to reduce the risk of the disease emergence. Continuous wheat often favors and creates ideal conditions for wheat diseases to flourish.

K-State Research and Extension’s [Seed Treatment Fungicides for Wheat Disease Management](#) publication is an excellent source for wheat seed treatments frequently used.

KDA’s mission is to serve farmers and protect plant health in order to help ensure the continued strong contribution of agriculture to the state’s economy. It is important to use as many voluntary strategies as possible to mitigate this disease which could have international trade implications in the future.

For additional information on wheat diseases in Kansas, check [www.agriculture.ks.gov/ppws](http://www.agriculture.ks.gov/ppws) and <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/wheatpage/>